

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 31, 2009

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks, Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior and Environment
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Simpson,
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior and Environment
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dicks and Ranking Member Simpson:

We are writing to thank you for your support for the Office of Environmental Education at the Environmental Protection Agency, and respectfully request that you continue this support by fully funding environmental education at the authorized amount of \$14 million.

To address increasingly serious problems associated with environmental degradation and global climate change, it is necessary to accelerate deployment of low carbon technologies and clean sources of energy. Environmental education is a proven tool to prepare Americans to compete globally in high growth environmentally friendly fields such as energy efficiency, green building design, commercial scale renewable energy, biofuels, low emission vehicles, energy efficient manufacturing facilities, and the production of environmentally friendly products.

Programs supported by EPA's Office of Environmental Education help train, educate and prepare citizens for careers in environmentally sustainable fields that promote the global transition to less polluting, higher efficiency technologies and practices.

Environmental education generates enormous benefits. First, environmental education provides critical tools for a 21st Century workforce by giving students the skills to understand complex environmental issues so they may make informed decisions in their own lives and find solutions for real world challenges facing us as a nation. Environmental education can also spark interest in science and math, providing a future pathway for high-tech careers. Increasingly, business leaders recognize the value of environmental literacy to their long-term success.

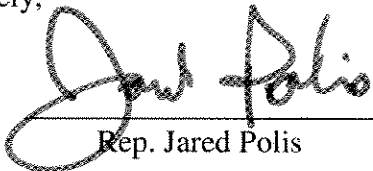
Research shows that when environmental education is incorporated into the curriculum or used as an integrating context for learning, students perform better on standardized tests in reading, math, writing, social studies, and science. Other studies have documented that environmental education achieves the following: improves critical thinking skills; motivates students to become more engaged in the classroom and achieve more strongly in their schoolwork; reduces discipline and classroom management problems; encourages civic engagement and environmental stewardship; and leads to better problem-solving skills.

Funds are allocated under the National Environmental Education Act to the EPA's Office of Environmental Education, the Teacher Awards Program, the Environmental Education & Training Partnership (EETAP) teacher-training program, and the National Environmental Education & Training Foundation (NEETF). EPA has awarded well over 3,000 small grants to schools, universities, museums, zoos, aquariums and local governments. The Environmental Education & Training Partnership has provided training to over 100,000 educators with an emphasis on professional certification and skills development. Through the National Environmental Education & Training Foundation (NEETF), \$10.9 million leveraged grant dollars for environmental education has been awarded.


Fully 95% of American adults and 96 % of parents support environmental education being taught in the schools according to an environment survey conducted by Roper Starch Worldwide. Environmental Education is strongly endorsed by the 60,000 member National Science Teachers Association because it provides "context learning" for students to absorb abstract scientific principles by seeing them in a real world context. Students who are well-grounded in environmental education understand scientific principles better, test better in science, and are better equipped to compete in today's global economy.

Thank you for considering this request.

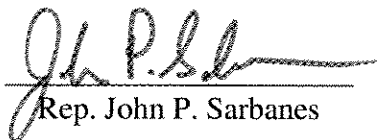
Sincerely,



Rep. Jared Polis



Rep. Mike Castle



Rep. John P. Sarbanes



Rep. Todd R. Platts



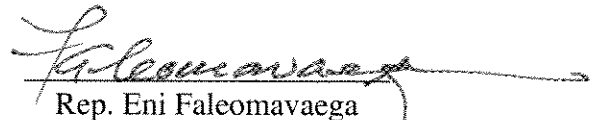
Rep. John Coeyers



Rep. Heath Shuler



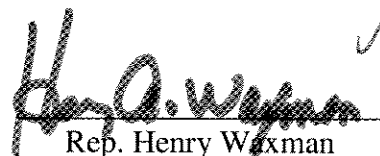
Rep. Mazie Hirono



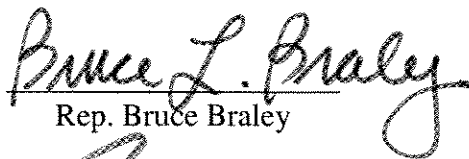
Rep. Eni Faleomavaega



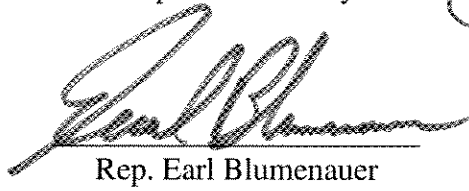
Rep. Raul Grijalva



Rep. Henry Waxman

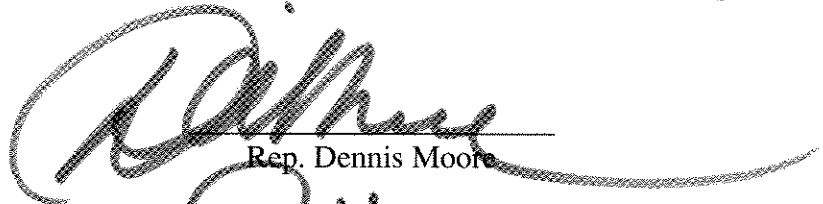

Rep. Bruce Braley

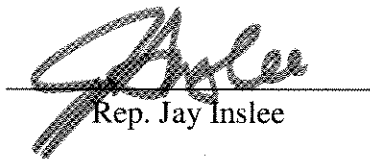

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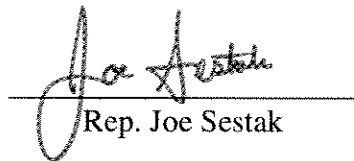

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Rep. Dennis Moore

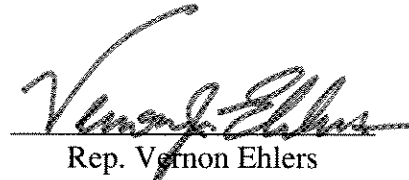

Rep. Jay Inslee

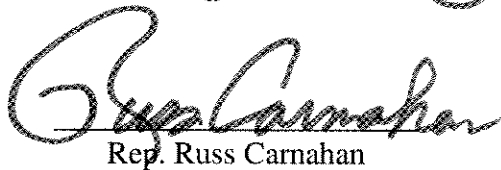

Rep. Peter Welch

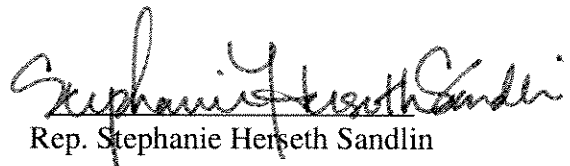

Rep. Joe Sestak


Rep. Dave Reichert

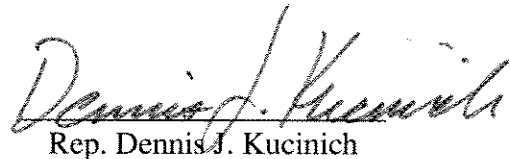

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